

# Cases: The Accusative

You already learned that the **subject** of a sentence is always in the **nominative case** (*Einheit 2.2*).

Most sentences also have a direct object which is a noun or pronoun that is the target of the action expressed by the verb, such as what (or whom) is being loved, bought, possessed, or otherwise acted on by the subject of the sentence. The **direct object** is always in the **accusative case**.

	Nominative	Accusative
	Das ist <b>ein</b> Stuhl. <b>Der</b> Stuhl ist rot.	Ich kaufe <b>einen</b> Stuhl. Ich kaufe <b>den</b> Stuhl.
	Das ist <b>eine</b> Lampe. <b>Die</b> Lampe ist gelb.	Er kauft <b>eine</b> Lampe. Er kauft <b>die</b> Lampe.
	Das ist <b>ein</b> Buch. <b>Das</b> Buch ist schwarz.	Lilly kauft <b>ein</b> Buch. Lilly kauft <b>das</b> Buch.
	Das sind Bücher. <b>Die</b> Bücher sind alt.	Wir kaufen Bücher. Wir kaufen <b>die</b> Bücher.

In the first two sentences in the middle column, the items (*Stuhl, Lampe, Buch, Bücher*) are the **subject** of the sentence and therefore used in the **nominative case**.

In the two sentences in the last column, the pronouns and noun (*ich, er, Lilly, wir*) are the subjects (nominative case) and the items become the **direct object** in the sentences, indicated by the **accusative case**.

As you can see, **only the masculine forms** of both the definite and indefinite article **change** depending on whether they are part of the subject (in nominative) or part of the direct object (in accusative): **der → den; ein → einen**.

The forms for the feminine, neuter, and plural articles stay the same.

The **negation with “kein”** and the possessive adjectives also follow the same rules, only the masculine form changes from nominative to accusative:

*Ich habe keinen Wintermantel.  
Ich finde deinen Pullover schön.*

**\*ACHTUNG\*** The **direct object** of a sentence is always in the **accusative** case.

## Question words *wer* and *wen*

When you ask for the **subject** of a sentence, you use ***wer*** for persons and ***was*** for things:

***Wer*** ist der Premierminister von Kanada?

***Was*** ist deine Lieblingsfarbe?

When you ask for the **direct object** of a sentence, you use ***wen*** for persons and ***was*** for things:

*Ich besuche **meinen Onkel** in Berlin.*

***Wen*** besuchst du?

*Meinen Onkel!*

*Eva isst **einen Hamburger**.*

***Was*** isst sie?

*Einen Hamburger!*